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Second Salisbury Rowan-United Summit and Project Safe Family Day Event to Engage Community in Positive Youth Venues for Safer Community

Summit Follow Up to Focus on 8 Key Areas Identified by Community as Deterrents to Youth Violence and Gang Participation

Project Safe Holiday Family Day to Focus on Gang Awareness, Drug Education and Ensuring School Success for Children

Salisbury, NC_November 27, 2007 – Salisbury Mayor Susan Kluttz cordially invites citizens to attend the second community-wide summit entitled, ***Salisbury-Rowan United II: The Next Steps in Creating an Action Agenda for a Safer Community and a Positive Future for our Youth.*** The informational public session and resource exhibit will be held this Thursday, November 29th at 6:30 pm at the Salisbury Civic Center, 315 S. Boundary Street. The event will serve as a follow-up to the initial summit held in June of this year.

“**Next Steps**” will continue the tradition, as established in the previous summit, of joining City and County Resources. The evening program will offer welcome remarks to attendees by both Mayor Susan Kluttz and County Commission Chairman Arnold Chamberlain following a color guard presentation of the American Flag by the Salisbury Police Department Explorers Unit. Salisbury Police Dispatcher Robin Allen will share the National Anthem with attendees.

Fountainworks President Warren Miller, master facilitator for the original summit held in June, will follow by sharing the process through which citizen input was captured, compiled and utilized to create the action agenda. Miller will also highlight the eight plank areas identified by citizens in June, as examples of community intervention and prevention work which would assist in creating a positive future for local youth. Representatives from these eight focus areas will join Miller on stage to offer a brief one-minute message regarding their local agency and their respective role in the Action Agenda. Highlighted areas include: Law Enforcement, Recreational Opportunities, Mentoring & Tutoring, Parenting, Jobs and Educational Opportunities, Schools and School Based Programs, and the Faith Community. Miller will share that the remaining plank, Community Education and Awareness, is the experience which all attendees are receiving through their presence at the Summit II event, the realization and educational uplifting of positive youth opportunities. Following the conclusion of the informational segment of the program, attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy refreshments and visit booth exhibits and displays and speak with representatives from each of the eight,

identified focus areas. In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to exchange previously completed information cards for door prize tickets.

Salisbury Police Chief Mark Wilhelm will offer insight into local gang activity and introduce members of his newly expanded Salisbury Police Gangs Unit. The larger task force is the product of a \$260,000 budget allocation, unanimously approved by the Salisbury City Council for 2007-2008. Police Chief Mark Wilhelm, pleased with the community's commitment to the first summit, hopes that citizens will return for the follow-up session to see the results of their input. Wilhelm notes, "We are looking for an increased awareness and participation for existing programs and mentoring venues while offering a sense of belonging for our youth. These areas which our community has identified, offer constructive and preventative community activities and provide alternatives to gang involvement." Wilhelm shares that the Salisbury Police Department has comprehensive educational programs which are consistently shared with students, K-12. In addition, over 40,000 complimentary gang awareness and violence prevention booklets for youth and adults are being printed at this time and will be distributed locally over the next six months. "We are extremely thankful to our booklet sponsors for their dedication in providing a safer community for all. It is through generous donations and grant funding from Wal-Mart, Food Lion, Beaver Brothers Heating and Air, Rowan Regional, KKA Architecture, Chamberlain Exterminating, F&M, and The Robertson Foundation, that we are able to provide awareness materials for all ages." To receive these complimentary publications which are currently available for pickup, please contact Karen Wilkinson, Public Information and Communications Manager, at 704-638-2113.

Mayor Kluttz shares that for those unable to attend the follow-up summit, an opportunity to share new suggestions and ideas is available by visiting the Salisbury-Rowan United website at www.salisburync.gov/positiveyouth. The site offers action agenda updates, local news reports and an email link for citizens to share input with the Mayor and City Council. Mayor Kluttz states, "We continue to receive wonderful feedback from our citizens and appreciate their support and dedication to this community-wide issue which plagues the entire nation. The action agenda has truly been created through direct feedback from our citizens. By taking the "Next Steps" together, we can provide a positive future for our youth. I sincerely encourage everyone in Salisbury-Rowan to attend the November 29th event." In addition to the receipt of information, all Summit II attendees will receive free goody bags, complimentary refreshments and the opportunity to win exciting and valuable door prizes. Over \$1,000 in free giveaways will be offered to Summit II attendees.

The initial summit, held at two locations, drew a crowd of over 500 attendees. Mayor Kluttz shares, "Through interactive summit feedback sessions, these dedicated citizens offered innovative ideas and novel suggestions for positive youth intervention. This invaluable source of information has been utilized to create a community-wide action agenda for deterring youth violence and gang participation. Our November 29th follow-up summit will uplift these eight areas which our citizen input has identified. We encourage all citizens to attend **Salisbury-Rowan United II: The Next Steps**, as we offer information regarding these eight specific areas, provide increased awareness for their existing programs for youth and share program specifics through on-site agency personnel."

In addition, Kluttz shares Project SAFE Salisbury will hold its second Family Day event on Saturday, December 8th. The event, sponsored by the Rowan County United Way,

will feature a holiday theme and include free photo opportunities with Santa. Holiday Family Day, which serves as a positive intervention and prevention program for kids (grades K-5), will take place at the Salisbury YMCA, 828 Jake Alexander Blvd, from 9 am – 1 pm. Registration will begin at 8:30 am. The agenda will be similar in format to the August family day event which drew nearly 1,000 participants. Lt. Rory Collins, Project SAFE Program Director for the Salisbury Police Department offers, “These community events provide a positive venue for our citizens and create increased awareness for affirmative youth outlets. Children are currently being targeted for gang activity at a very young age and by involving children in positive and productive roles, we can potentially deter their involvement in future gang activity.” In response, Family Day will offer excitement and education for children through the Win-Win Resolutions Puppet Show, McGruff the Crime Dog, a Moon Bounce, games, arts & crafts, Santa Claus and the Salisbury Fire Department’s Fire Safety Smokehouse. Informational booths and displays will include: Project Safe Neighborhoods, Youth Services Bureau, Rowan Partners in Education, Communities in Schools, Salisbury Parks & Recreation, the YMCA, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Adolescent Family Enrichment Council and the Salisbury Rowan Community Service Council. Available informational Workshops for parents will include: Project SAFE Neighborhood Gang Awareness, Anti-Gun Violence Education, How to Help Your Child Succeed in School Workshop and an Interactive Drug Educational Puppet Show.

The family event is sponsored by the Rowan County United Way in conjunction with the Project Safe Neighborhoods Task force. Citizens are encouraged to partake in this special family event which features a live DJ, free food and drinks and a free goody bag for each family. Door prize drawings will be offered in each workshop with additional drawings to take place at 1 pm. Winners must be present to claim their prize and must hold a ticket punched with proof of attendance at available workshops. Free giveaways will be available to the first 500 attendees and early attendance is encouraged. The Rowan County United Way is committed to building a better community by striving to increase the quality of life and making the Salisbury-Rowan community a better place to live. Services provided to the residents of Salisbury-Rowan, include the funding of 16 local agencies which ensure that essential health and human services are available. For more information regarding the Rowan County United Way and its supported agencies, please call 704-633-1802.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a federally funded program, created to reduce violent gun crime by partnering volunteer citizens with law enforcement. Past violent offenders are notified that their crimes must stop and those willing to change their ways are assisted with available resources. Those offenders that do not heed the warnings by local law enforcement officials and accept community support will receive the maximum allowable sentence for future crimes. For more information regarding Project SAFE Salisbury, visit www.salisburync.gov/projectsafe/safesalisbury.htm .

The City of Salisbury is an equal employment opportunity employer with over 180 different job classifications and 400 full time positions. For more information regarding the City of Salisbury and its services and departments, please visit us on the World Wide Web at www.salisburync.gov.

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